



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **21 CHARGED IN MAJOR DRUG INVESTIGATION**

***NY and Penn. residents face marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogen and amphetamine charges***

BUFFALO, NY — Peter Smith, Special Agent in Charge of the Buffalo office of investigations for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Kathleen M. Mehlretter, Acting United States Attorney, announced today the unsealing of a criminal complaint charging 21 individuals with violations of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 843(b), conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogenic mushrooms and amphetamine, all Schedule I and II controlled substances, and use of a communication facility to commit a drug felony. The charges in the criminal complaint carry maximum possible penalties of 20 years imprisonment, and a fine of up to \$1,000,000.

Charged in the complaint were:

Larry Masich, age 26, of Amherst, New York;  
Craig Waldeck, age 26, of Niagara Falls, New York;  
Michael Schelb, age 23 of Bridgeville, Pennsylvania;  
Patrick Dolan, age 25, of Buffalo, New York;  
Daniel Masich, age 29 of Tonawanda, New York;  
Mark Masich, age 27 of Tonawanda, New York;  
Richard Swygert, Jr., age 24 of Buffalo, New York;  
Brian Masich, age 18 of Tonawanda, New York;  
Joshua Bluman, age 28 of Williamsville, New York;  
Christopher Rathman, age 29 of Grand Island, New York;  
Ariel Rodriguez, age 26 of Buffalo, New York;  
Francisco Pichardo, age 27 of Bronx, New York;  
David Lilly, age 40, of Tonawanda, New York;  
Karl Maurer, age 27 of Tonawanda, New York;  
Daniel Santillo, age 30 of Buffalo, New York;  
David McCall, age 26 of Orchard Park, New York;  
Valerie Lindemuth, age 27 of North Tonawanda, New York;  
Shawna Bacon, age 22 of Tonawanda, New York;  
Jonathon Franco, age 26 of Amherst, New York;  
David Kohler, age 26 of East Amherst, New York; and  
Greg Syposs, age 27 of Niagara Falls, New York.

Further, Patrick Dolan was charged in an indictment unsealed today with unlawful possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1). The charge in the indictment carries a maximum possible penalty of a term of imprisonment of 10 years and a fine of up to \$250,000.

It should be noted that the fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. (Disciplinary Rule 7-107(B)(6)).

Acting United States Attorney Kathleen M. Mehlretter stated that the complaint charges the defendants with conspiring between April 2005 and July 2005 to sell various quantities of marijuana, cocaine, psychedelic mushrooms and Adderall, a prescription medication which contains amphetamine. In the complaint it is alleged that the marijuana distributed by these individuals was high grade hydroponic marijuana smuggled into the United States from Canada.

The indictment against Patrick Dolan alleges that he unlawfully possessed a handgun and ammunition in April 2004 which handgun and ammunition were seized during the investigation leading to the return of the charges unsealed today.

“This was a criminal enterprise which developed a sophisticated drug smuggling and distribution network in western New York. Criminal drug organizations such as this are a danger to public safety and national security,” said Peter Smith, Special Agent in Charge of the Buffalo office of investigations for ICE. “Importing drugs into the United States and distributing in our neighborhoods tears at the very fabric of our communities and creates street crime and violence that endangers everyone.”

The filing of the charges was a result of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force investigation on the part of ICE, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Peter Smith, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge Nancy Coté, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge David DeJoe, United States Postal Inspection Service under the direction of Jeffrey Sayward, the Amherst Police Department under the direction of Chief John Moslow and the New York State Police under the direction of Major Michael T. Manning.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*